

## ABSTRACT

The invention provides a system and method for establishing and managing authenticated electronic documents (e.g. commercial contracts) whereby the content, revision status and authenticating parties are stored, tracked, retrieved and validated on demand by permitted users. Variable document data is input by user into an electronic form template and this data is captured by the system. The system derives a document number and revision number for the document and all of this identifying information is associated with the document and stored. A document digest formula is applied to generate a unique document digest. The system then generates a unique barcode for each page of the document based on the digest, document number, revision number and paging details and the barcodes are electronically added to the associated pages of the document. Either the parties to the document sign a printed copy of the barcoded document or a digital signature is applied using a third party validation service. The resultant signed and barcoded document is stored electronically whereby permitted users may locate existing documents (e.g. contracts), track document revisions and validate document contents and signatories.